7

RITES OF PASSAGE AND PRESTATIONS

The Muduga social organization is viewed as a complex net work of exchange and transactions of gifts and assistance betw een agnates and affines particularly at the tone of ceremonies and rituals. Life-crisis rituals provide the most conspicuous context for public and formalized gift exchanges and various responsibilities and obligations.

Life-crisis rites occur at points in an individuals life when some significant change is thought to be taking place in his social position. The events have an economic aspect and exchange, and interaction between affines forms a major part These arc ceremonial occasions performed in a broader social context and viewed as special circumstances in the sense that rituals come to be the occasions of gift exchanges and the discharging of obligations. The affinal obligations and mutual exchange of gifts and prestations operate at the primary core within a limited circle formed ideally by two affinally connected households families, and through the rule of extension establish laterally to a wider circle. Following is the description of exchange of gifts and obligations betw een the two categories that take place on various life crisis rituals.

Child birth .

The soctal organization of the Ufe crisis which the birth of a new member const tutes include a series of accepted behav tors both for the mother and her kin and affines. Delivery and child birth is one such crisis situation calling for the observ ance cf ceremonies for the good of the mother and the child. Some of these observ ances arc ritual in nature, others arc designed to protect the fecafeh of the mother and baby and some may combine these functions.

When a w oman become pregnant for the first time, in the fifth or seventh month, her parents invite both the husband and wife fc> their fet* *km* a ceremony called *'kosh bera sora'* (first-pregnancy feast). During this ceremoey rice is specially prepared ani along with curry made of chicken is served for the fecobaad and w fe in plantain leaf Thes

ceremony is attended only by closely related kin. After finishing the food, the woman keeps Rs.5 ¼ under the leaf in which she ate. This amount will go for her *attai* (usually her brother's wife) who serves food and takes the leaf.

Among the Mudugas, birth should take place in the husband's hot attended by her husband's kin usually husbands mother, husband's sister or even husband's mother's mother. At the out set of child birth, the woman is placed in a state of isolation and is considered impure and she is treated as if she were ill After the birth, the ambilical cord is cut and the placenta is buried. After delivery, the mother » put mto certain restrictions and this separation procedures include seclusion, sexual and dietary prohibition and cessation of household activities. The mother and the child are secluded m a corner in the *dheetti* (varandha) of the hut. Sometimes a compartment is made in the comer where the mother and the child remain secluded. The seclusion normally lasts for about one month But now-a-days it is observed for 7-10 days after which she resumes her normal routine

A temporary screen will be made in the back side attached to the main hut for the mother to take bath and to bathe the child This is made of cycas leaves (*eenthu patta*) by the husband himself Mother and the child takes bath in hot water duly The mother's *attfai* prepares hot water, and assist the mother in bathing the child She is not allowed to take bath in the stream or pond where the other members of the hamlet bathe and fetch water. The mother is restricted to a diet of *rut puttu* (food made of ragi Hour) and curry made of tamarind known as *pulirasam* for so en days. During these seven days she is Dot allowed to take rice and other food items. She will be given separate mat to steep and plates for food and nobody touches it Her husband's sister (*attai*) takes cart in preparing and sen ing food for her Sometimes food is prepared and giv en to the mother from close relativ es or *beethekarar*.

When a woman is under birth po lution, her husband should not hunt game and should avoid eating meat. Stnce delivery brings pollution to the hut, it return affects the husband and to a certain extent the 'god of hunt *arrow*, which is installed the hut If a man goes out into the forest for game when his wife s under pollution, it w bring wrath of the *arrow* and will not be getting any hunt.

A woman takes the cessation of her menstrual period to be the first indication of pregnancy and looks for other symptoms. They have finJe interest in calculating the expected dale of the birth, but if asked they may estimate that it is due in particular season of the year; generally seven or eight 'crescent moons' (*tombu*)after the first sign of pregnancy appears. A woman's everyday activities change little when she is pregnant. A pregnant woman makes no elaborate preparation for the delivery of her child. She carries on her usual work in the hut and field until the first sign of impending labour, and then she moves into a corner of the *dheetti* of her hut. After around one week since delivery, even before pollution is over, she may go out to the near by forest for collecting fire-woods and also attend minor agricultural works in the field. However, she restricts herself from cooking and entering the kitchen. Thus as Van Gennep Says, "the physiological return from child-birth is not the primary consideration, but that instead there is a social return from child birth" (1909 46)

After the pollution is over, the mother and the child takes bath in hot water applying turmeric. On that day. special food is prepared with rice or *same* and given to the mother along with chicken curry After this the mother resumes her daily routine 1 fe The floor of the hut especially *dheetti*, where the was secluded, will be plastered with cow-dung Even after the pollution is over, the mother continues to take bath in hot water for about two months

Among the Mudugas, there is no practice or custom of keeping the child in cradle (*thotta*) but is always found along with the mother in her lap close to her body covered by her upper garment They believe that if a child is put alone in a cradle to sleep, it will be affected by evil spirits known as *pichathu* After the birth of a new baby the recently-weaned child slowly separates from the mother and will be seen most of the time with his/her father They rarely demand for milk and silently watches the Brother suckle the bab>

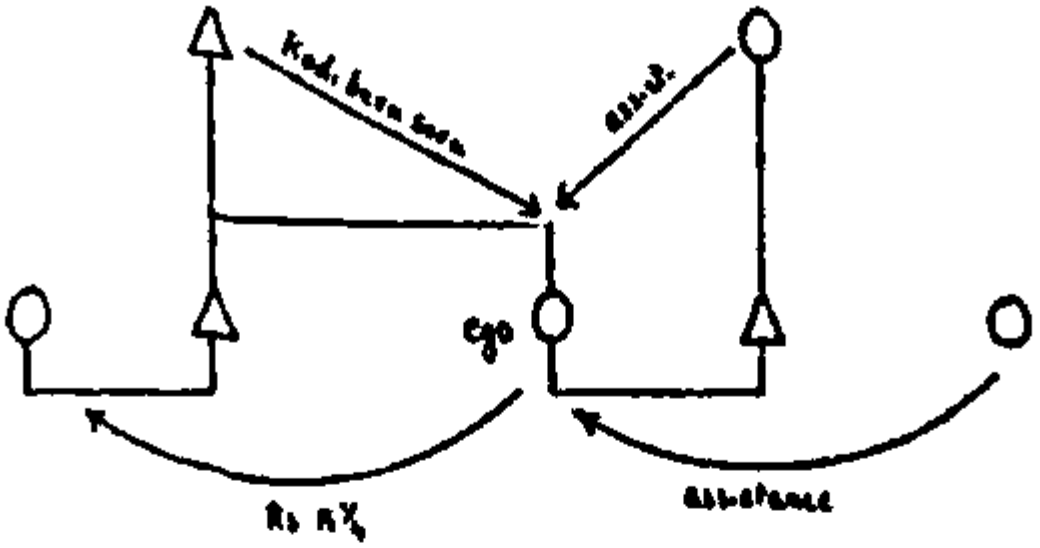


Fig 7.1 Exchange associated with child-birth

Naming : The naming of a child is usually done during the third or fourth week after birth The name giving will be performed by immediate agnates like FF. FeB, FyB or even father. A child should be named after a patrilineal ancestor of the appropriate sex So that, a boy should be called after his close agnates like FF FeB FyB, etc and a girl after her paternal ancestors like FM, FBW, etc Vanϖ giving is not a major ceremony and is confined to the immediate kin circle. During the name-giving ceremony when the child cries, few names of the ancestors are tried and fce name at the mention of which the child stops crying is regarded as the apt oae This way of naming a child practiced by the Mudugas is known as *agarisha pera palishratha*.

Mudugas believe that if ancestor's name are not given lo the child, it would be an offence against their ancestors and bring wrath of their *ancestors* resulting in the death of the child. If repeated death occurs in a particular family, it will create doubt in the family members and through a shaman (*pattukaran*) will find out the cause, and as a remedial measure will agree to keep the particular ancestors name for the next child. Naming ceremony is considered as a nte of incorporation which introduces the child into the society. It anchors the child to the descent group establishing its patrilineal kinship to other members by identifying him with one of his ancestors. Although names are also chosen in other ways than the ideal one, it is still from a limited set belonging to a wider patrilineal group, which shows that both personal identity and social continuity is maintained.

Tonsure Ceremon> : When the child reaches the age of 2-3 years, the first hair-cutting ceremony is performed. The 'hair-cutting' ceremony is performed by the mother's brother, and usually the mother's eldest brother has the right lo do this ritual. The mother's brother keeps the child on his Up and ritually cut a small tuft of hair After the ceremony, the child and the mother's brother are given food together The mother's brother is presented with a *vetti* (white cloth) and ten*panam* (i e, Rs.2.50) is given (now-a-days it is about Rs. 5 ¼) The amount is given by the child to the mother's brother which is kept under the plantain leaf in which be took food. Only close relatives participate in this ceremony and it is never an occasion for elaborate celebration.

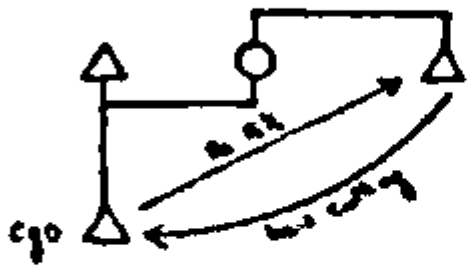


Fig. 7.2 Exchange associated with tonsure ceremony

Ear boring ceremony : This ceremony is observed when the child reaches an age of 3-5 years. The child often has its ears pierced by the mother's brother. *Kara mullu* (thorn of a wild plant) is used to bore the ear and after boring the ear, a small thorn is kept- Later this thorn will shed automatically when the ear-hole enlarges and an ornament called *kadukkan* is put in the ear of the boy, and *kammal* in the case of a girl. Ear-boring is not considered as a major ceremony and no formal feasting is held.

Puberty Ceremony ; Puberty mark the physical and social transition from childhood lo adolescence. This is a period marked by seclusion and considered polluted and amounts to certain restrictions. There is a separation from ordinary life and social relations. entering a phase of liminality and subsequently reincorporating into society in their new status. Among the Mudugas, a girl *is* permitted for marriage only after attaining puberty and most often marriage takes place one or two yean after puberty

At the on set of a girl's first menstruation, she is secluded lo a screened-off portion in a comer of the *dheetti* (varandha) The screen is made of cycas leaves. Sometimes a small temporary hut (*sethe*)ts made adjacent to the main hut and this will be built by a male cross-cousin(*machan*)of the girl She is led into the hut by her female cross-cousin (*attai*)who will be assisting her most of the time and serving food for her until the pollution is over. She observes seclusion from other members and will be given separate mat to sleep and plate for food Milk, butter milk, curd, ghee etc. are prohibited during these days

Among the Mudugas, the attainment of puberty ts known as *muluki poisuthu*(to over flow) or *bavasikku banthathu* (coming of age), and the girl ts considered impure and polluted during this period However, it ts the occasion of celebration and formal feasting for the Mudugas. This mixed attitude towards attaining of puberty is noted by Dumont w hen he says, "the ceremonies are linked to the celebration of the event on one hand and to the impurity associated with menstruation on the other" (1986:269). Thus the three states which one passes through in a puberty ceremony are impurity and pollution associated with it, isolation or separation from the rest of the society and the final phase of purification.

The girl leads a secluded life inside the *sethi* for about seven days. On the seventh day she takes a ritual bath in a near by stream accompanied by her *attai*. Turmeric water will be sprinkled on her body and the old clothes which she was wearing will be put to fire. After the bath when they come back to the hamlet, in front of the girl's hut, a wooden mortar (*ural*) and pestel (*ulakka*) will be kept. Holding the pestel, they together ritually pound a little *same* grains three times. Then both enters the *dheem* of the hut. At this time, the *attai* (either MBD or FZD) will present the girl a plate of auspicious items which include *adukku* flowers, tender flower cosmos sulphureus, of jack tree (*sakke-peeli*), comb (*korika*), mirror, needle and thread, oil, etc., which according to the Mudugas are symbols of fertility (*pillaphalam*).

After this, the girl and her *attai* (also referred as *thunakkan* meaning companion) together sit for food served in the same plate. The girl takes a handful of rice and when she is about to eat, the *thunakkan* will tap on her hand making the rice fall in the plate. This will be repeated three times. Then the *thunakkari* takes a handful of rice and when she is about to eat, the girl beats on her hand making the rice fall. This will also be repeated three times. After this, both the girls will eat from the same plate. Another plate of rice will be given to the *thunakkan* which she takes to her hut. The beating of each others hand is a major event of the ceremony and is called *kaithatrathu*. This ritual act shows the closeness and the mutual right and obligation between MOD and FZD (*attai*). This is followed by a formal feasting, and rice is cooked and is distributed to the entire hamlet. This rice prepared on the occasion of puberty ceremony is called *nirumtho kanji*. During this occasion the mother's brother will make gifts like clothes, oil, sweets, bangles, etc., to the girl. This ceremonial occasion on the seventh day of puberty is called as *elikdathinaneram* (the day of bringing out).

With this, her pollution and secluded life will not end completely. She again has to lead a semi-secluded and restricted life (a seclusion which will be repeated more briefly during later menstrual period) for seven days. But the place of seclusion changes and now she sits in a corner of the *dheem*. Thos the period of seclusion lasts for a total of fourteen days after which she takes bath and enters the hut. This ceremony of entering the hut is known as *koorapukunaneram* (day of entering the face).

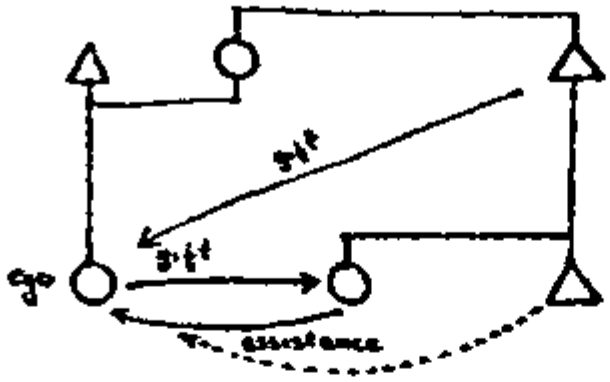


Fig. 7.3 Exchange associated with puberty ceremony

Marriage Marriage among the Mudugas brings together not only the two famil es but the entire descent group in an alliance relationship The chain of gifts of presentations exchanged between the affinally related famil es symbolize the alliance tie and constitute the most important features of mamagc relationship Marriage is general y considered a* a contract between two groups which 1$ more an economic contract and less rel g s schematization takes place It brings in a tramfcr of women fr«r» one fami y lo another and from one group to another Through this transfer there is alw ays a loss for one side which is an economic loss and is compensated through bride-service and bride-price.

The major transaction associated with marriage tt the *panipayanam* amounting to Rs 251'. which is paid during the marriage ceremony or in a later stage For meeting this amount, a formal collection takes place amoeg all the agnates *anna-thampi* who have gathered there, which may be called as a son of "maternal presentation Dumont,

1983:81;1986:256). The amount received as bride-price for their daughter will be distributed among the close agnates of the bride's femTK, An amount of Rs. 10 ' . is paid as *thaimaman-panam*(mother's brother's money) to the maternal uncle of both the bride and the groom as a compensation for the right be was having in his sister's children as spouses for his own children.

The bride's father who receives the *parisapanam* is supposed to make a counter presentation consisting of a cattle and other household utensils. (Tor detail description of marriage procedures, see Chapter 6).

After the marriage there follows the exchange of gifts between the groom's and the bnde's house which consist of household provisions like rice, oil, chilly, salt, dhal, sweets, etc. These gifts are earned from one house to the other in baskets when the married couple gives formal visits called *maruvachi*, first from the groom's hut to the bnde's and then from bride's hut to the groom's.

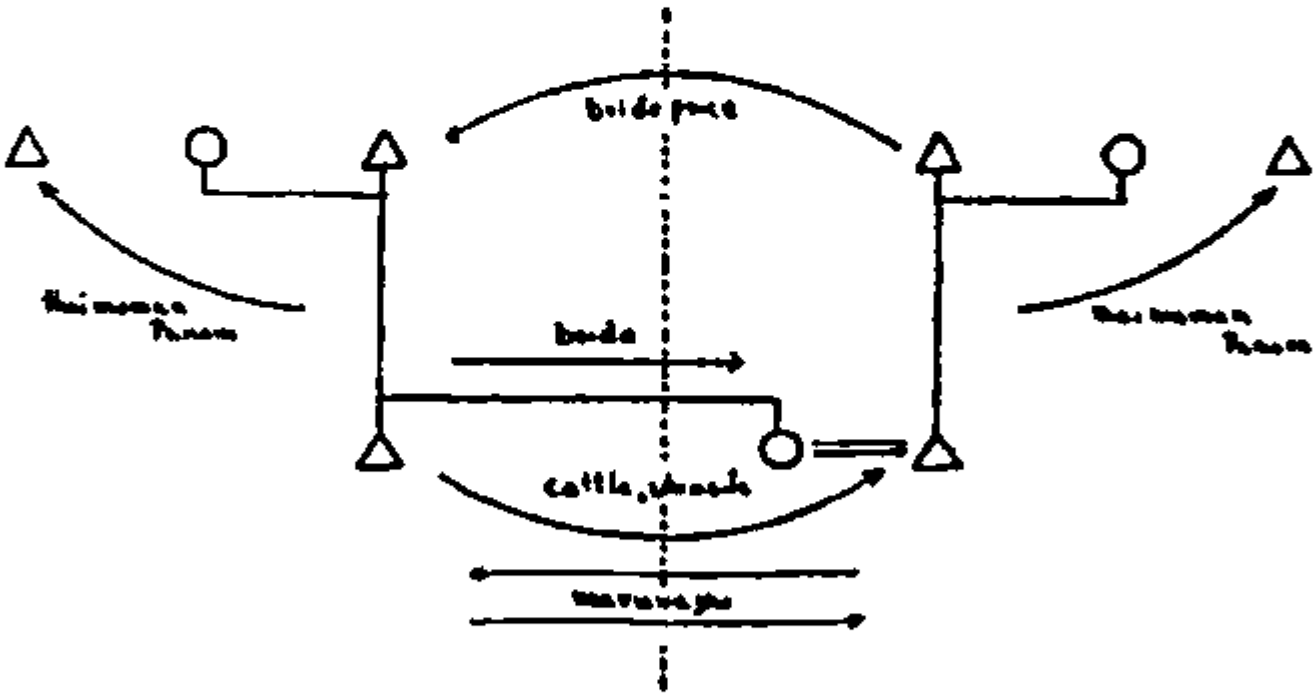


Fig. 7.4 Exchange associated with marriage

Death and funeral ceremony : Like birth and other fife-crises, the people passes an organization of the experience of death which is met by the mortuary *riles* and practices associated with it. The dimension of the social and cultural organization of death can be understood through an analysis of beliefs and conceptual schemata about death and also through the manner in which the crises of death is managed within the group Like other rites of passages, death also represents a transition from one status to another, and as Van Gennep (1909) says it follows three distinct stages, 'that of separation, that of transition and that of incorporation*.

Among the Mudugas, the ritual and ceremonies associated with death axe inter connected to the total social system not only in the symbolic significance within the conceptual frame but also in the kinship and other social identities of the mam ritual participants. Thus there is seen a formalized patt cm of interaction and prestations which involve not merely material gifts, but exchanges of rights, duties and obligations of all kinds between the two categories, agnates and affines. Certain roles may be performed by the agnates of the departed, whereas others are the duty and obligation of his affines.

Among the Mudugas, immediately after death, the corpse is covered tn white cloth (*mundu*) put by his close agnate especially son or brother or even father tn the case of a young man, and the women gather round the body to weep Message (*sawu seiki*)is sent to all kin and affines in other hamlets and usually kinsmen residing tn the same hamlet will go as messengers. If anyone is overlooked, he or she will be extremely angry at affront and keeps away from attending the funeral On the other hand non-participation in the funeral, even after receiving the message and if this act ts considered a serious breach of the social relationship

Later, the bod) is displayed tn front of the hut by creating a small rectangular structure called *goodagara*covered on all four sides top with sarees or long clothes Fresh plantain stems along with leaves are used as pillars oa four corners The cutting of plantain symbolically represents the separation of a person from fett kin group like the plantain which is separated from its group The corpse ts placed oa a ladder like bamboo bier called *Luni*or *Lana* The hart of *Kowtree* (*Helecteruisova*)[3] is used as string to tie the bamboo sticks in making the Her The preparation of *Luni* is rise duty of affines

During the funeral of Kalamoopan of anakkal hamlet, *kattil* was prepared *by* faxs three son-in-laws and his 'sister's children.

Close relatives (agnates and affines) from other hamlets come in small groups. Each arrival is marked by a renewed outbreak of crying. Tbe women come and sat round the corpse under the *goodagara* and keep wailing. Men will stand Dear the head part of the corpse for a few seconds and then as a mark of respect loach the head of the corpse and then touch their forehead.

Among the Mudugas, wailing is a major event of tbe funeral and thus is done by almost all the women close and distant who have assembled for the funeral giving it a sort of ceremonial status.[4] While wailing, the women will be uttering the past events and happenings in the life of their departed relative with a rhythm of its own. This weeping at the funeral is called *paleme solli agaruratbu* Ceremonial wail ng is a symbol not only of sorrow but of social ties, the function of fetuch is based on the assumption that all participants will come to feel positive sentiments of social bonding by joining in the prescribed behavior. Those who feel no direct sorrow themselves will nonetheless weep which provides a source for the sentiment that is transformed in ritual

The Mudugas believe that these wailing or lamenting function as invisible tentacles which hold back the soul of the departed relative from leaving that place immediately The more time they spend in weeping or wailing the more time the frou] is held up and the more honor they give to the deceased. Soon after death, burned charcoal will be kept under the corpse to avoid evil spirits from 'attacking and taking away the corpse

Among the Mudugas, it is considered as a n important obligation liar one lo attend the funeral of ones relative and to wail for the departed Non-participation to attend the funeral is treated seriously anti it remains a life long debt foe them. Thus later they have to visit that hamlet and should express their grief and sorrow by wailing in the deceased relative's hut till the sorrow subsides. This custom of wailing as a later stage is called *saavuku elavu veeduratbu* (paying the taeral debt). la a case at Thaze-Abbannoor. when Mathan's children died, Mathan s elder brother's daughter Man who was married to Chittoor hamlet could not attend the *tixxnL* But fir* months later when she visited Thazea-Abannoor she straight away went to Mathan • old hut, where the

children last stayed, and kept wailing expressing ber grief and sorrow, thereby fulfilling her obligation which remained as a debt.

An important event of the funeral ceremony is the offering of white clothes (*sawa seela idurathu*) where close relatives including both agnates as well as affines keep a white cloth near the corpse as mortuary gi fts. This circle of near relatives usually include father, siblings, children, cross-cousins, brother-in-laws, son-in-laws, esc At Thaze-Abbannoor, during the funeral of Ramaswami, *sawa seela* was put by his ciose relatives which includes his father Kaden, father's two younger brothers, father's father's ekier brother's son, father's father's younger brother's son, Mother's brother, sister's husband, wife's father's younger brothers, wife's classificatory elder brother, wife's mother and her two sisters

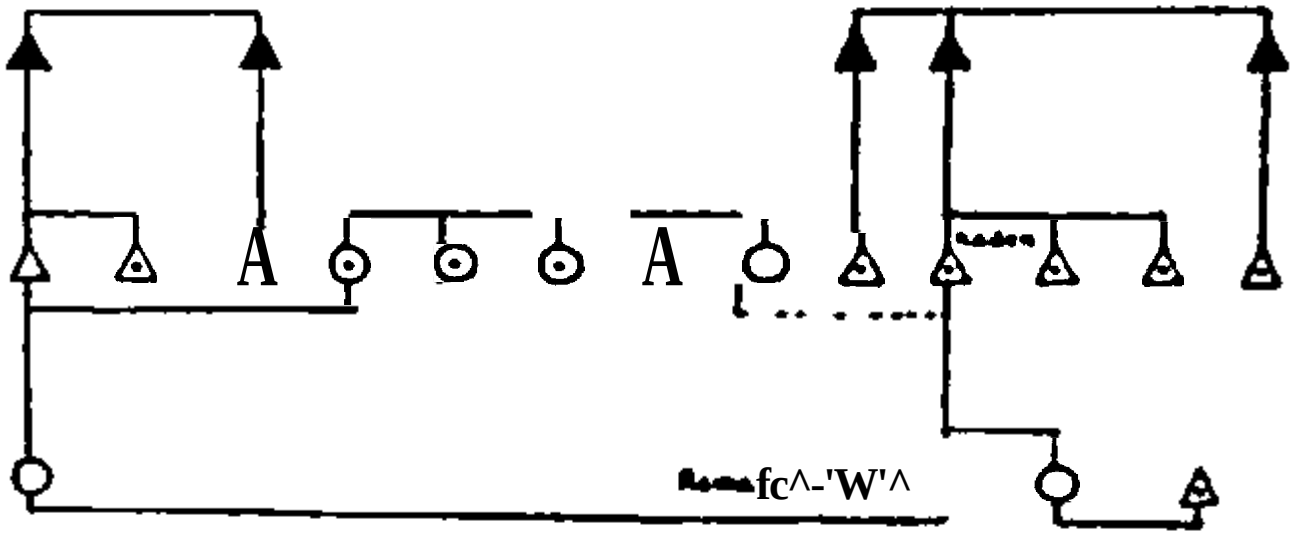


Fig. 7 5 Relatives who offered *sawa seela* during Ramaswamis death

Usually in a hamlet where a death has occurred men arc seen sitting m small groups here and there in the corners of the hamlet or m the *dheeri* (varandha) of their relatives hut gossiping and talking about their departed one. At the same time m another corner of the hamlet, preparation will be taking place for drumming and dancing which is the major event of the Muduga funeraL *Para* (drum made of earthen pot with leather on one side), *davil* (cylindrical wooden drum with leather on both sides) and *kuval* (flute) are the major musical instruments for the funeral. They warm the leather of the instruments by keeping near fire so as to make it firm and tight to get better sound. Now slowly young men and girls gather round the 'musicians' and will be eagerly waiting and making themselves ready for the event.

Then the drumming starts, accompanied by the music of flute and rt alone continues for about an hour. Then at last, the drums and the flute begin m earnets and the young men and girls start to dance. The number of dancers slowly increases as docs the crowd of onlookers. The noise and excitement grows and there arc little sign of gnef Gradually the focus of activity shifts from the women to the men, from the decreasing wailing to the increasing dancing.

Women and girls dance in a close circle round the *goodigara*. The elder boys and men join together so that there *art* often two or three concentric circles one enclosing the other. The dancers in the inner circles move very slowly with rhythmic foot work forward and backward clapping their hands together in an anti-clock wise direction. Men who are in the outer circle will be little fast in their foot work stamping hard on the ground. The movements and style of the dance varies according to the songs and the music played [5] Each singing and dancing last *for* about half an hour which abrupt!) ends in an outburst of shouting and whistling, and the dancers retreat This event of dancing, singing and drumming during fractal ceremony has its own meaning and function for the total system.

Men of important social status like *mannudaran* (priest *moopan* (headman elderly persons are buried with elaborate rites such that the funeral is a feast which anended by large number of fcimnvti honouring the deceased *by* drumming, singing and dancing day and night for two to three days. They believe that the more days they wail and dance, the more they are honouring the deceased. This is clearly evident when the

people often say, *"aattum pattum bethu ellam nalamakki bidadom"*, meaning flat "through elaborate dancing and music should make the funeral better and send the dead one happily and in proper manner to the other world" Thos as Huntington and Metcalf says, "it is a vehicle for the expression of a considerable range of emotions; grief and exasperation fade into an act of honouring....the dead man" (1979 .38).

The dancing and singing accompanied by music will continue all ttrovgb the night till dawn except for small intervals after every round. Rice or other food grains will be distributed to every family in the hamlet depending on the number of relatives from other hamlets staying with them. This share of rice called *veettu padi a* cooked tn each hut and is served to their relatives assembled there from other hamlets. Black tea will be prepared and is served frequently The entire expenditure towards this will be met by the immediate agnates of the deceased. Once the corpse is displayed outside, it marks the event of drumming and dancing held for one or two days and the immediate agnates have to bear the enture expenditure. The display of corpse tn the front yard of the hut under the *goodagara* is called *saw kalakku bakruthu* In very rare cases like the death of young members or when a family is running short of money to bear the heavy expenditure, the body will not be placed tn the front-yard for tinging and dancing tn an elaborate manner

In the morning, people disperse for their primary needs and assemble again after a gap of one or two hours. Elder members then gather together in a corner and start discussing about the bride-price and other issues related to it. If the bride-price is not yet paid or any balance remains, a *panchayath* consisting of the council members of the hamlet and other elder members from both party adjourns to as to fettle the issue and collect money towards the bride-price *(for* detail see Chapter 6)*

When all the expected relatives art present, the corpse is taken to the backyard *i* the hut for washing. Both the agnates and affines gather for this bathing of corpse. CXI is applied on the head and the body is washed with turmeric paste Silver coins are stuck on the forehead using the latex of jack tree A four *anna* coin is kept in the mouth aad then milk is poured. This is also done immediately after the death. If fee deceased is a married man, then tbe wife's bangles will be removed and put the hands of the corpse and a hole bair from tbe right side of her head is removed and tied to the big toe of the right foot of the corpse For washing the corpse "pouring of water" over the head

(*thanniatturathu*)is done by affine of opposite-sex, and thus for a male, this will be done usually by his brother's younger wife. She tales a pot full of water and raise it up and down three times and then pour the entire wader over the corpse's head. She also apply oil (*enna atturathu*)on the head and turmeric paste on the face and chest of the corpse.

Now another ceremony called *urumei atturathu* follows, which is also performed by the affine of opposite-sex. Thus for a male, this is done by his female cross-cousin (*attai*) or any other who falls in this category For this she takes a little oil in her right hand and after folding touches the outside of the palm to the chest of the corpse and keeps the inner side towards her own chest This is done three times and then she keeps a silver coin on his forehead and takes back another Those who are doing the *urumei atturathu* will be given Rs. 10 '« as *urumeiattiapanam by* the agnates of the deceased. With this amount, they usually buy a small chicken and will keep in the name of the dead person This chicken is called *urumei attta kachi*

The word urimei' carries the meaning, "right" or "claim" This term is used to describe the right and obligation of a male cross-cousin over his female cross-cous Since it is the real cross-cousin who is the rightful and apt spouse, when in actual practice mamages take place with others who art not real cross-cousins, thtt ceremonial or ntual act *of unmet attaraihu* symbolically represents the non-negotiable nght and ob gation of a person over his / her real cross-cousin. Moreover, this ritual act clearly depicts and is the expression of the notion that the alliance relation is inherited through generations. Even if a man has married his MBD, his FZO will have the nght to perform the *urumei attrathu*

During Kalamoopan's funeral ceremony at anaikal feamkt, *thanne atturathu* was done b> his younger brother Rangan * w fe and *urumei attar* it was performed by Kalamoopan s MBD Maruthu.

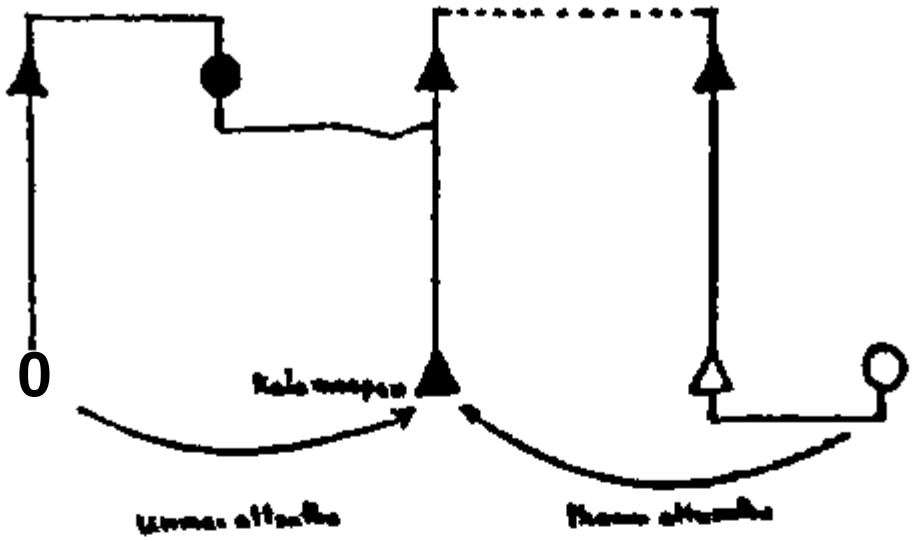


Fig 7 6 *Urimei atturathu* and *thanni atturathu* during Kalamoopan's funeral

At Thaze-Abbannoor, during Ramaswami's death, *thanni atturathu* and applying of oil was done by his cUuificitory elder brother's wife who is in the category *amai* and *urumia* fl/wro/Ai# was performed by his *tohcr* f classificatory sister's daughter who ts also his wife's younger sister (*attai*)

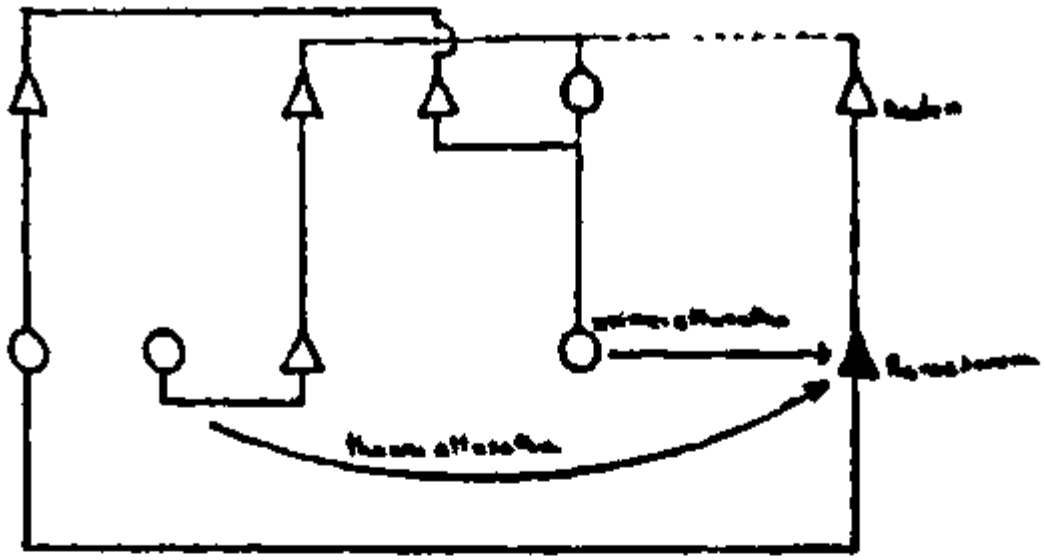


Fig 7 7 *Urimei atturathu* and *thanni atturathu* during Ramaswami's funeral

After the washing, a turban is tied round the head a male corpse The corpte is then laid in a sitting posture with legs folded and hands crossed across the chest on a white cloth and the ends of the clothes art bed together The corpse s now prepared for the burial From the backyard the corpse is then taken straight to the hut and after holding for a tittle while inside the hut, it ts then taken out with legs *to** ards the fron and kept in the initial place under the *goodugura* Immediately women ts large number gather and sit round the corpse for their tat wailing

At the tame time another ceremony known as faA *aturathu* is performed For this ceremony, the wife % brother (if the deceased ts a male) standing backside of his sister and then turning back, will put a cloth over feet tod covering her face Thts is followed by aa outcry of women who gather round the widow and fcoA4*{ fctff weep

aloud. This ceremony marks her widowhood. If the deceased is a woman, then her husband's sister will perform the *kodi idurathu* for the widower.

At the same time, a little amount of *rai* flour is made into paste and with that along with a particular variety of grass known as *karalapulla* and a little hair from the right side of their head, the agnates (*anna-thampi*) rotate the corpse in an anti-clock wise direction and keep the *rai* flour and grass along with the hair on the right side of the corpse. The affines (*macha-maman*) rotate in clock-wise direction and keep the *rai* floor and grass along with the hair taken from left side of their head on the left side of the corpse.

Now it is the time for the final round of dancing and singing when more than a hundred of them including men and women, young and old gather round the *goodagaru* in circles dancing fast stamping their foot hard, clapptng their hands and singing loudly. This creates an atmosphere of extreme noise with load wailing, singing, drumming and shouting. As a mark of their last honour and homage to their departed, men and women dance vigorously and sing aloud.

Oru mara sole
minnal mara poove
minnal mara poo parikkan
poku modajathikale
la-le la-le la te

(One-tree forest
f ghting-tree flowers
to pluck those lighting tree flowen
w you come again my affi
la-le la-le .la-le)

When the singing and dancing ts about to end, the *goodagaru* will be dismantled and the agnates will hold the four corners of the bamboo bier (*kattil*) on which the corpse is placed so as to proceed to the grave-yard. At tfa* time, the ceremony of *kattukal-pidikkathu* lakes place when the dead man s sister's son ritually obstructs the procession by sitting on the corner of the bamboo bier and toli^S back. He will recede only if

some metal objects like steel pot or knife is given on assurance that a cattle will be gifted to him later by the deceased's agnates. In the case of a woman her brother's son will perform the *kattakal-pidikrathu*.

At Anakkal, during Kalamoopan's death, his younger sister Malli was seen weeping aloud all through the day with unbearable grief and sorrow. When the final round of drumming and dancing was about to over, she burst into loud cry hitting herself and rolling on the ground. However, when the *goodagara* was being dismantled, she was seen searching in the crowd for her son Mallan. And later when the corpse was about to be lifted, she compelled him to obstruct the procession by holding back the leg of the bamboo bier. Mallan came forward and then sitting on the edge of the *kattil* on which his mother's brother's corpse was laid, held it back not allowing them to proceed. Immediately, as advised by an elder agnate of Kalamoopan, his son Murugan handed over a small steel pot to Mallan assuring that a cattle will be given in future and to be satisfied with it at present Receiving the pot, Millan wept aloud and both cried holding each other's shoulder. With the small pot in his hand and weeping aloud, Mallan was scen walking away from the crowd

When the procession reach a few yards outside the hamlet, they stop to perform yet another ceremony called *semia-cheyrathu* Here, the dead man s wife takes three circles round the corpse with an earthen pot of water on her head. While doing thus, her brother follow* her with a small tickle with which he lap* the pot making a small fcok through fehich the water oozes out. After the thud round, on reaching the foot part of the corpse, she drops the pot towards the back side breaking it to pieces.

After this the funeral procession proceed* towards the graveyard which will be situated a little away from the hamlet in the forest. Women are usually fc*t*-M« fr cnicnng the burial ground and they return to the hamlet, or weeping aloud they watch tbe procession till it fedc out from their sight. The corpse placed the bamboo bier is earned by affines holding on four corner* with the leg towards the An elder agnate of the deceased leads the procession strewing the grains of *ragi* some all the way up to the grave yard. The parts of the dismantled *goodugara* will be carried along with the procession and is thrown reaching a particular place called fcAi^Jt*.

After entering the grave-yard (*chudula*)they identify the place to dig the grave near to where their agnates have been buried. Before digging the grave, an elder agnate of the deceased with a *kauri* flick [8]holding *upside* down ritually digs three tone* on the ground. Then few others especially the affines start digging the pit which will be about 4 feet length 3 feet width and 4 feet depth. After the grave is ready, three small strips of white clothes taken from the corpse are placed in the bottom of the pit each to the upper, middle and lower portion horizontal!} Then the elder agnate of the deceased will throw *same* and *rai* grains three times into the grave from both the upper and tower side The corpse is then taken by the affines holding on the four corners and is raised up and down three times and lowered into the grave with head part towards the south, thus facing northward The corpse ts laid in the grave in a sitting posture with legs folded and hands crossed across the chest[9]. Wooden planks will be placed above the corpse to as to avoid mud falling on the corpse Then turning back, all of them put handful of earth into the grave three times after which the grave ti covered Small stones are heaped on the head portion as a mark for identification

The roots of trees unearthed while digging will be gathered and heaped on either sides of the grave They believe that these roots if not filtered out from the soil will create obstacle for the easy movement of the soul in and out of the grave The bamboo bier will be dismantled and is kept on one side of the grave Since the Mudugas believe that the deceased must h\e in the next world, his survivors are careful to equip htm with all the necessary things like food and tools. A plate *of same* cake and a cup of water along with the small basket of grains are kept near the head portion on the right side The plate, cup. and bask et are si ghtly cut with a knife on one side before it (placed For a man, a knife and for a woman, a hoe (*kotha*) with its blade reversed and a smal sickle (*kora kathi*) is placed on the right side of the grave Polishing stone (*mundinallu*) used by a woman will be buried in the grave along with the corpse

After this, the *nigoal km edakuratlu* is performed by a close and elder agnate For this, the stem of a dry and a green *dharbha* grass are taken and then remembering the name of one of their ancestors, the dry stem ts fc**erai into the earth onthe head part of the grave and is taken This ts then repeated with *the* green stem remembering the name of the deceased By doing this, fteii believe that they bring along with them the *nigoal*

(shadow or soul) of their ancestor and the deceased to the hamlet. Then all of them without turning back come out of the grave-yard and proceed towards the stream where they wash to purify themselves from pollution and return to the hamlet. They take the same route back to their hamlet without deviating.

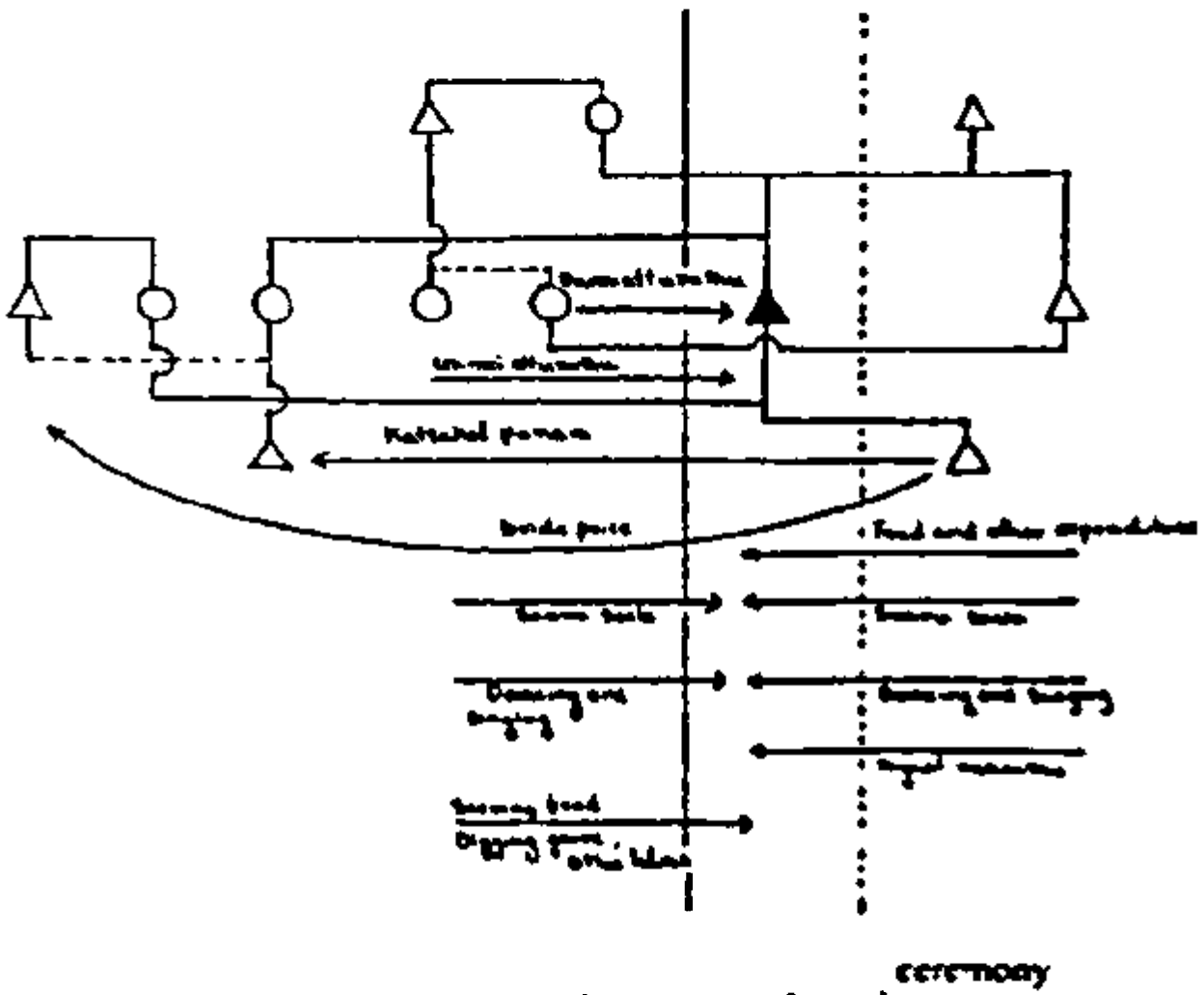
While the men coming from the grave-yard (*chudala*) enter the hamlet, women and children keep away from their sight. Mothers are seen chasing away the children to the backyard of their huts to protect them from getting possessed by their ancestor's soul believed to have accompanied the men from the grave-yard.

In front of the deceased's hut, a wooden litre (*pod*) filled with water is kept by a woman who is a close kin of the deceased and all the men from the grave-yard come straight to it and see their shadow in the water. This is to confirm that their *nigaal* (shadow or soul) has come back along with them without remaining in the grave-yard. Now the *nigaalnokrathu* ceremony is performed by the elder agnate through which the soul of the deceased is introduced into the company of the ancestor (for detail see Chapter 1). After the *mgaat nokrathu* is performed, the women who is closely related to the deceased come and spill the water from the litre on the ground and then weeping aloud she kneels, pressing her face and chest on to the wet ground and then walks back to the hut calling aloud the name of the deceased. By doing this they are inviting the soul of the deceased to the hut. During the funeral of Kaden's son Ramaswami of Thare-Abbannoor, the above ceremony was done by Kaden's present wife Poliche. Kaden's first wife Mallika who is the mother of Ramaswami though present at the funeral, did not have any right to perform the ceremony since they had divorced. But it was Mallika who had taken care of her son Ramaswami when he fell sick and was all through with him till his death. After the *nigaalnokrathu* Kaden's present wife Poliche came and poured out the water from the litre, then knelt and pressed her face on the ground, and wailing aloud she wailed back to her hut calling the technonymous name of the deceased "Santhappo Santhappo". While this was done, Mallika was seen away from the crowd in a corner weeping alone.

On that day in no but sweeping is done and the ashes in the fireplace be kept untouched. The sweeping is thrown to the backyard only after a day. The *nigaal* of the deceased is offered food for seven days. In certain cases this may extend for more days.

This offering of food for the *nigaal* of the deceased is fcnemn as *melse-helraika*. At Thaze-Abbannoor when Radon's younger daughter died. offerme of food to the *nogaal* w as done for about two months.

Thus conclude the funeral rites of the Mudugas and the relatives who have assembled w ill disperse except close kin who stay back for one or two more days.



ceremony

Fig. 7.8 Exchange relation during funeral

A living adult is be hev ed to be a composed of thrpe different elements the 'body' (*oLimpil*), the 'breath' (*kattnor u ru*) and the 'shadow (*ergaal*) and all these elements undergo transformation after death. Once the breath goes out from the body permanently, it results in death and through burial the body gets decomposed. But the *nigaal* or soul after separating from the body remains till Dry funeral when it is incorporated into the world of ancestors. The freeing of the soul completes a soul cycle begun by 'naming'

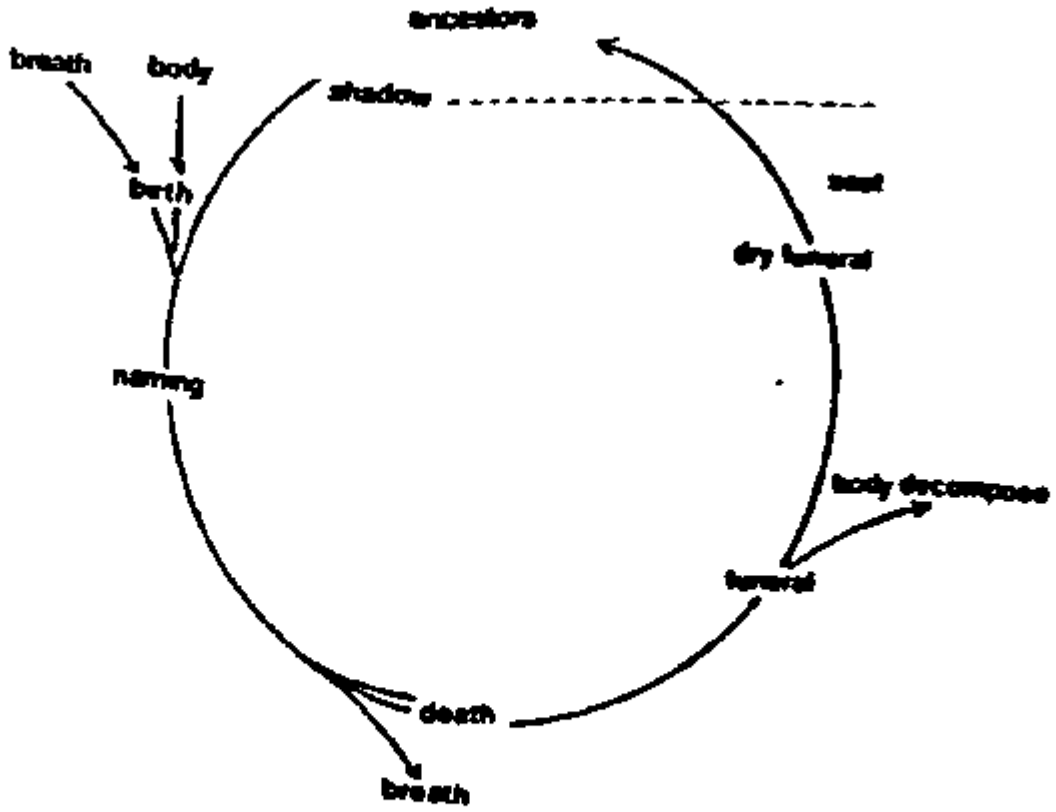


Fig 7 9 Soul-cycle

Dry-funeral ceremony.

Like all other life-cycle rituals, the funeral ceremony also consul of the element* of separation, transition and incorporation However, the survey of death rituals by Van Gennep (1909) shows that it is the transitional or the liminal which dominates mortuary ritual and symbolism than the element of separation. He views funeral ritual as a transition that begins with the separation of the deceased from Life and end* with his her incorporalion into the world of the dead Accord ing to him, "the transitries have a duration and complexity sometimes so great that they must be granted a sort o autonomy" (1960 (1909) 146). People strongly believe that there is a transitional phase called "intermediary period" where the mortal is neither alive or fcfiU)' dead (Hertz 1907) [1] The end of this period is marked by a great celebration during which among

the Mudugas, this intermediary period is clearly distinguished by separate funeral ceremonies,[12] first one is the actual funeral (*sawu*), which takes place immediately after death, and the second is the dry-funeral *(hara sawu)* done several years later during which the bones of all the deceased since last Dry-funeral are collected, and returned in a rock cave after performing several rituals . The length of the intermediary period may be prolonged by several factors, such as the need to accumulate a income resources for the feast and moreover it is a collective ritual for the village. During this intermediary period, the grave-yard (*chudala*) is believed to be the abode of the formless soul (*nigaal*) and at times visits the hamlet and usually feared by the people. The dry-funeral terminates this transitional period by honouring the dry bones of the deceased. confirming the soul's arrival in the world of ancestors and establishing the dead as an immortal ancestor. The division of funeral into two parts (double obsequies) separated by several years enable people to mourn the disruption of society, but later to reestablish its order. According to Radcliffe-Brown, "ceremonial customs arc the means by which the society acts upon its individual members and keep alive in their minds a certain system of sentiments. Without the ceremonial those sentiments would not exist, and without them the social organisation in its actual form could not exist** (1964 : 324)

Thus funeral ceremonies should be examined ts expressions within the social order reinforcing collective senUment and social integration through formal pattern of behaviour and interaction and analyzed as ntuals having symbolic significance and meaning within the conceptual level

Dry-funeral (*hara-sawu*)r *seeru* is a grand memorial funeral being performed once in forty to fifty years when the bones of all the deceased agnates since the celebration of last dry-funeral, are collected and after performing several obsequies are reburned. All the relatives in the neighboring hamlets actively participate in these celebrations and may even include the *kurumbas*

Prior to the actual celebration of dry-funeral, a preliminary ceremony called *kalluku rai-attrathu* (putting *rai* for the stone) is performed in the house of the *mannukaran* (priest). For this ceremony, the elderly affines (*thala-kettu-mappilai*) living in other hamlets are invited, and it ts they who perform the major role This is not elaborately celebrated and only close relatives from neighboring fcmlcts are invited

Dry *rai* grains [13] will be put into the grinding stone (*beesu kallu*) in the *mannukaran's* hut and the senior affines arrived from other hamlets together hold the stick (*kambu*) of the grinding stone and rotate it three times clock wise and anti-clock wise. While doing this, women gather outside the *mannukaran's* hut and wail aloud. Food prepared out of *rut* is offered to the ancestors. This grinding stone will be covered from them with a bamboo basket (*thekku*) till the end of the dry-funeral. All the elders gather together to decide and fix an auspicious day to conduct the dry-funeral ceremony. The affines will also have a say in this decision making. The agnates and affines equally participate in celebrating this ceremony and both have their definite roles, rights and obligations to perform.

Dry-funeral is a grand and elaborate celebration which lasts for about four days. On the first day *paccha-savu* ceremony is performed. This is performed for those deceased agnates who have been buried without any formal celebrations involving drumming, dancing and singing They do believe that a person's dry-funeral or the *bara-savu* cannot be observed without formally performing his *paccha-savu* rites and hence it is done prior to the *bara-savu* For this, the relatives of the deceased proceed to the grave-yard with dry *darpapullu* (a wild variety of tall grass, *Poa cynosuroides*) leaves made into a coil with a knot at one end symbolically representing the deceased Reaching the grave-yard, they keep the grass on their respectn c relative's grax e and pronouncing their name they take it back. All these *darpapullu* representing the *paccha savu* (corpse) of deceased relative will be taken together on a small bamboo bier called *kattil*" and tf kept under the *goodagara*" constructed in the centre of the hamkt Women who arc relatives of the deceased ones come in separate groups and wail silting round the *goodagara* Then the music of drum and flute starts and men and women dance round the *goodagara* This ceremonial act of wailing of women in group and the performance of drumming, dancing and singing will continue for a major part of the day In the afternoon, the *paccha-savu* along with the bier (*kattil*) is taken out from the *goodagara* and brought to a distant place from the hamlet and is put to fire after heaping dry twigs over it. The male relatives of the deceased then holding the burning twigs circles the burning *paccha-savu* three times. Among them, the affines (*macha mamas*) go in a clock wise direction, and after making three rounds place the twigs near the food part of the burning *paccha-savu*. These burning twigs are called *thalai kolli* (head twigs The

agnates (*anna-thampi*) go round in an anti-clock wise direction and place the twigs at the leg part. These twigs are called *kaal-kolli* (leg-twigs). Women and children are not permitted to go near the burning pyre, and will watch from a distance wailing aloud.

After the cremation of the *paccha-savu*, the *niggal nokruthu* ceremony will be performed which will be similar to that performed during death ceremony (see Chapter 1). The ceremony is performed for all the deceased for w horn the *paccha-savu* is held and through this the souls are introduced to their respective ancestor. This concludes the *paccha-savu* ceremony.

Now the preparation for the dry-funeral ceremony starts and for this, a huge elaborately built and decorated three to five stoñed 'funeral car* called *gudikettu* with four corner legs and a long central pole (*naduthoon*) is constructed. The construction of this structure is mainly done by the affines and it is they who bring the particular wood for the central pole supplied by Thodukki hamlet.[16]

The bones (particularly collar bones - scapula) of their agnates who have been buned in other hamlets will be unearthed one or two day* prior to the celebration by a team of elders headed by the *mannukaran* and is brought to the hamlet These bones covered in white cloth is kept inside a small conical structure under the *gudikettu* After this, women will come in large groups and sit round the *gudekettu* and will wail aloud Men and boys start dancing round the *gudikettu* accompanied by the music of drum and flute Later women and girls also join and the singing and dancing will continue all through the night

In the next morning, a procession led by *mannukaran, moopan* and other elder members of the hamlet proceed to the grave-yard accompanied by drumming. They take with them metal rings kept in a bamboo container near a tree on the way to the grave-yard Reaching the grave-yard, they dig the grave of their respective deceased kin tn search for their collar bones If they fail to secure the bone, then they put the metal ring in the grave and pronouncing the name of the deceased will take it back representing the dry bone After this, *urun ei attruthu* will be done by close affines. For this, a bale oil is taken in the right hand and after folding, the outside of the palm is touched fto the bone and keeps the inner side of the palm to his her own chest. This is repeated three times.

The bones are then washed and arranged on a small bamboo bier in white clothes which is placed under the *gudikettu.* The bones brought from other hamlets will also be grouped along with this. Once this is performed. an ordinary gun *is* fired signifying the completion of this ceremony known as *karipolai,* and is followed by load wailing of women gathering round the *gudikettu.* The ceremonial aspect of wailing as an act of expressing emotions and grief reinforcing collective sentiment becomes more explicit during this dry-funeral.

Men and women start dancing around the *gudikettu.* While dancing and singing goes on, close relatives of the deceased, usually women, throw coins, tobacco, beedt, grains. etc , upward walking round the *gudikettu* weeping aloud Children and women struggle hard running round the *gudikettu* for getting these However, the dancing goes on continuously. Dancing and singing accompanied by drumming continues all through the night till dawn

On the third day by early morning the people will disperse for a short time They again assemble after a gap of about two to three hours and women gather round the *gudikettu* and resume wailing Dancing and stngtng accompanied by the music starts again and continues till noon Simultaneously in another corner of the hamlet, arrangement goes on *for* the *panchayath* meeting This is held particularly for settling the issues related with bnde-price payment of the deceased when it ts not paid or if any balance still remains The bnde*s relatives will put forward the case by keeping a *dakshina* of Rs 1 ¼ along with betel leaf, nuts, beedt, etc , to the *panchayath* When all have placed their case, the deliberation starts one by one led by two persons, one as groom's *jathi* and the other as bnde's *jathi* The subsequent procedures are simitar to the *panchayath* held during marriage or funeral (see p 26*30 chapter 4) In the deliberation if the husband's group have been detected to be the defaulter, the *panchayath* will ask them to make the payment, and the agnates of the husband then pool the money and give it to the *jathi* who will then hand it over to the wife's people If any case remains unresolved, their bones will not be considered for the subsequent ceremonies

After the *panchayath* is over, the event of the 'coming of affines' so participate in dry-funeral is enacted and is followed by the important ceremony of 'goat smashing *The* affines (*machu-maman*) are the main participants of this ceremonial it outlines the

significance of the affines especially the sisters children's obligation and duties towards their mother's brother and also at the time of the latter's *bara-savu* ceremony.

For this, the affines with white turban tied round their head and holding an umbrella with a male goat in one hand and a bag of ten sir rice on the shoulder come in a row from about hundred yards away from the hamlet as if they are coming from a different hamlet to participate in the *bara-savu* of their mother's brother. They are formally received with the music of drum and flute and after entering the hamlet, they holding the goats in one hand and rice on their shoulder make three rounds around the *gudikenu* The gifts brought by the affines are taken to the *mannukarans* hut and the goat brought by the senior affine (*thalai-mappilai*) is made to stand before the *karudanam* (ancestral god) installed in the *mannukaran's* hut. A distinction could be seen between the close affines and the distant affines with regard to the gifts they bring. Unlike the close affines, the distant affines need not strictly bring along with them bag of rice, but only goats and they will not circle the *gudikettu.* The affines residing in the same hamlet art also obliged to offer goats, moreover, as gifts for the *bara-savu*

Later all the goats are taken to a corner of the hamlet and the *mannukaran* sprinkles ritual water over them as sign of purification Then holding each goat by two men on their legs and raising upwards over their shoulders with heavy shouting and howling they run towards the *gudikettu* and circle it three times. The goats are then made to stand under the *gudikettu* facing the bones, and an elder affine a Her a short prayer first hits the head of the goat brought by the *thalai-mappilai* with an axe The skin and flcth on the head part between the cars of this goal is given to the *mannukaran* as offering to the ancestral god. After this all the remaining goats are smashed one by one to death Then the affines holding the blood stained axe, sticks, brooms, mud-pots and other household utensils in their hands dance round the *gudikettu* Later, the goau are taken to a different place and butchered for cooking,

Simultaneously, men and women resume dancing and singing around the *gudikenu* accompanied by the music of drum and flute which will continue throughout the night At night a grand feasting is arranged in which rice and meat is served to all who have gathered there for the *bara-savu.*

It is to be mentioned here that necessary arrangements will be made to supply rice and other provisions in the evening on all these four days for all those who have gathered for this elaborate function. One week before itself, they accumulate a surplus provision for the festival and the expenditure towards it will be met collectively try both the agnates and affines of he hamlet. However, the agnates are obliged to take the major share, and each household of the agnates should strictly donate a prescribed amount, whereas the affines residing in the hamlet contribute according to their capacity. The amount of rice supplied to the residents of the hamlet is called *veettu-padi* which is about two liters per household, and that supplied to the invited guest is called *vanna-padi* winch may be about ¼ liter per person or one liter for three persons. Most of the people who have come from other hamlets get their rice cooked in any of their relative's hut and eat along with them. Others who are not having close kin in that hamlet may borrow utensils from any of the hut and cook themselves

On the fourth day morning, the *gudikettu* will be taken from its place after offering a short prayer by the *mannukaram*, *moopan* and the afTincs who have constructed the *gudikettu* standing in front of it. At this time of departure all the women gather near and sitting round the *gudikettu* wail aloud and the entire hamlet will be with the sound of crying and wailing Then the *gudikettu* will be lifted by the agnates on their shoulders and is earned out of the hamlet in a procession to be dismantled tn a distant place While the *gudikettu* is about to be taken out, the a (Tines enter and block the procession by holding back the *gudtkettu* They will retreat only when they arc assured that a goal will be given to them later This ceremony is known as *kattakalpidikuratha* Thus affines are given a female goat in return for the male goats they brought for the ceremony

On reaching a little away from the hamlet near a mountain, the procession stops and the *gudikettu* is dismantled The bamboo bier *on* which the bone was kept will be burnt by heaping dry twigs over it and the bones wrapped to white cloth isrotated above the fire three times by the *mannukaran* and is kept between the branches of a nearby tree. The agnates and the afTines will go round the fire with burning twigs, and the similar procedure done during the *cremation of paccha-sava* will be repeated. After this, the procession returns to the hamlet where a *pallakuli* ts fetid to distribute the remaining

pro\isions and meat. The elder members of the hamlet will fix a reasonable rate for the meat and rice and it will be distributed out for the relatives who carve gathered there. The money collected from the *pakkalam* will be shared equally among the members of the hamlet. With this, the major ceremonies associated with the Dry-funeral comes to an end and the relatives gathered there will disperse by afternoon taking their meat and provisions.

After about seven days, the special ceremony of "burying the bones' will be performed. But one day prior to this, the ceremony of 'collecting *nigaal-kallu** (shadow - stones) is done. For this, a procession led by the *mannukaran* and other elders move towards the near by *Bhavani* nver *to z* particular place called *nigaal-kundu* where they perform the ceremonial collection of *nigaal-kallu* Here, they pronounce the respective name or kinship term of their deceased thereby watching closely the water-worn stones under the running water. Now when they sec a particular pebble moving immediately after a name has been pronounced, that stone is taken believing it as representing their deceased one or being possessed by their deceased one's soul [7] After collecting the *nigaal-kallu*, they proceed back to the hamlet and keep the water-worn stones ncaxb\ the hamlet in a particular place.

On the next day, along with the bones and the *nigaal kallu*, the elder agnates of the hamlet and senior affines will proceed to the *gobbe* (small rock-cave) situated away from the hamlet in the forest Half way from the hamlet, at a particular place they stop and *same soru* (a dish made *of same*) and chicken curry are prepared, which is offered to their ancestors in front of the *gobbe* After that, the bones are kept inside the *gobbe* and the *nigaat'kaiiu* are arranged outside near the mouth of the *gobbe* While doing this they take extreme care so that no shad w (n *gaal)* of any one of them fall tnside the *gobbe* since they believe that it ma> result tn their death. This 'second burial of bones shows how the agnates even though dispersed in other lands are abstracted out and finally incorporated into the 'world' of ancestors depicting their deep rooted agnatic ideology After this, they come back to the place where the preparation took place and *same soru* and chicken curry is served for the affines. Since this food is raausly associated with the 'keeping of stones* it is called *kallu-bekkuson** And moreover since it is served mainly for their affines 'sister s son/ son-in-law' (*mayyalakul* as a counter presentation for the

sen ice they have rendered during *bara-sanu* of their mother's brother. it is also called *mappilar soru* (affine's rice). This concludes the entire ceremony associated with *bara-sanu* or dry-funeraT of the Mudugas.

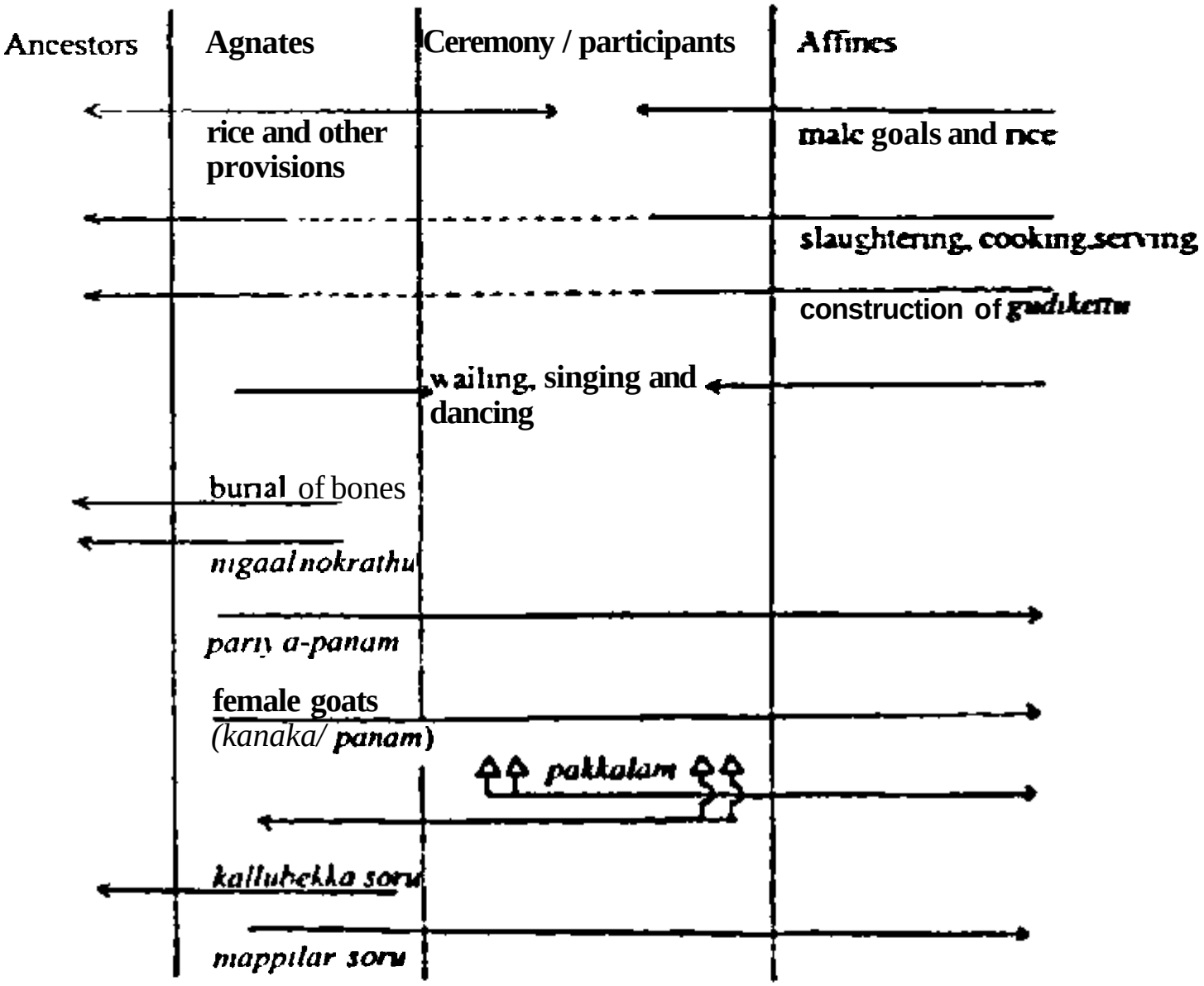


Fig 7.10 Exchange relation bet* een agnates and affines dun g fry funeral

Analysis of these funeral rites shows that almost ftunilar ceremonies and ritual procedures are earned out in all the three phases-death, green-funeral and dry funeral. and the evenu mainly consist of the display of the deceased, honouring of the deceased b> drumming, singing and dancing, the burial of the deceased and fiaalJy assimilating the deceased into the world of ancestors. The Dry-funeral or bara-sanu is considered as the most important and most elaborate event in Mudiga social fife depicting the rights and

obligations of, and the transactions between agnates and affines. The death and burial are sudden and unplanned, but dry-funeral on the other hand are prepared, organised celebrations that are determined.

The above description of ritual prestations and rights and obligations of kinsmen associated with the rites-of-passage depicts the nature of Muduga social structure by describing the value they place upon consanguinity and affinity. These roles and obligations clearly shows that the Muduga social relations are a combination of consanguineal (agnatic)and affinal relations, and a structural difference is always maintained between the agnates and affines in their behaviour, roles and duties towards each other The characteristics of this social structure is being generated from culturally defined strategies for bilateral affiliation and marriage alliances which insure social and economic security. Thus through the mechanism of prestations relating to different ceremonial and social events, Mudugas retain affinal networks which are reproduced with each new marriage. By maintaining this exchange relationships, the affinal relatives are brought into the closer circle of kin ensuring unity and cohesion.

In such a system of alliance and affinity, roles and relationships, as Dumont (1984) says, have permanence . while groups may fluctuate, change or vanish. These prestations, roles and obligations are not only the product of alliance relationship which shows the significance of affinity, but also the catalyst that sustains kinship ties. The gifts and obligations associated with marriage, funeral ceremony, and dry-funeral, etc., serve to intensify the importance of prestations, and the value of alliance relationship However, the rights and obligations associated with these life-cycle rituals are not affinal alone but a combination of both affinal and consanguineal It is important alto to note that these payments or gifts are not restricted between two immediate families, but tt is shared within the larger net work of relationships as a reminder that it has significance beyond the individuals within a particular alliance

From the point of \tew of ceremonial exchanges and sharing, there are two categories of gifts or prestations. The first one *often* takes place between two families or between two groups and the second one within each of the two groupings. Out of these two modes of exchanges, one is the lineal mode of exchange depicted through the propitiation of ancestors and the rights and obligations among agnates. The second one is

the lateral exchange through alliance and the attendant set of compensation payment. In the external realm affinal exchanges unites exogamous descent group through the exchange of goods, services and payments. In the internal realm, the sharing of food and labour, the pooling of money as well as the distribution of bride wealth defines the boundaries of descent group through the contrast between sharing and exchange.

The Mudugas extend considerable effort to keep an alliance going into the next generation Even if the gifts or payments are not paid or counter prestated in a particular generation, the children who are in the next generation continue as exchange partners of their fathers After one's parent's partner have died, the gift or prestation relationship will not break, rather the children take responsibility to extend this relationship. This could be clearly viewed in the case of bride-price payment where a son is obliged to pay the *pariya-panam* of his father after his death. Similarly, a brother's son will have the right to claim the bride-price of his father's sister in the absence of his father.

Although most of the prestations and counter prestations take place at the level of kin groups, the rights and obligations associated with rites-of-passages are essentially between persons of definite kin categories belonging to affines and agnates. Among all these relationship, the right and obligation between MB and ZS is the most cructal one observed It stresses the maternal uncle's role and the sister's son's obligation in ceremonial occasions like marriage, funeral, dry-funeral (*seeru*) etc This pre-eminence of maternal uncle can be understood very well from the alliance perspective and the diachromc affinal significance of maternal uncle If suppose ego has not >et married, his maternal uncle is his closest affine he is both the person who gives him presents on most ceremonial occasions and his potential father-in-law If the ego is roamed according to the rule, the maternal uncle is also his father-in-law Finally if ego has married differently, even then the affinal importance of his mother's brother remains. Thus in all the three situations, the maternal uncle s prominence ** evident from the alliance perspective.

The maternal uncle remains as maternal uncle and his right and obligation continues. The maternal uncle is distinct from other relatives because of special and more important gifts and also because of definite ceremonial functions The characteristic specific to the relationship of MB sad ZS ts that it ts affinal and at the same

time exhibits generational difference, and more over this relationship takes on a diachronic dimension. The maternal uncle's role, which is based on affinity or alliance, as Dumont (1986) says, owes its importance to the fact that it conlains alliance in a genealogical form : nol only 'synchronic alliance* bat also 'transmitted alliance*.

NOTES :-

i. Van Gennep (1909:66-67) makes distinction between physiological puberty and social puberty differentiating puberty rites from initiation (marriage initiation) rites which in most societies rarely coincide. Since marriage takes place one or two years after puberty, * physical puberty* precedes 'social puberty*.

2 Menstruation is considered as a period of inconvenience and interruption from normal life A menstruating girl is restricted from the kitchen of the hut and is secluded in a corner of the *dheeti* for about seven days. She cannot touch the vessels and approach the cooking hearth. To others she reveals her state of pollution by saying "nanu koorel ille", meaning 'she is out from the kitchen*. She is forbidden to engage tn productive occupations of sowing or harvesting, but may do other farm work and also go out for collecting fire-wood If the husband if a man of ritual importance such as *mannukaran*, agricultural ceremonies and other rituals may be postponed till the pollution is over On the sixth day, she takes a punficatory bath, washes her clothes and all the household vessels and resumes her normal state

3 *Kauri* tree- *Helecteres isora* of sterculiacea family, is considered ntually important by the Mudugas and are used for religious purposes They believe that their ancestors have used it to make digging stick *(kauri bayi)* which was their ma or tool and even now Mudugas prefer to make digging stick with the trunk of this tree

4 There are various occasions at which the Muduga women carry out wailing

a) During funeral ceremony they wail sitting round the corpse

b) when two relatives meet for the first tune since the death of a close relative of either of them , they embrace and weep together

c) when visiting a deceased relatives but for the first time since his her death, whose funeral ceremony was not been able to attend

d) during Dry-funeral, when bones are kept under the *gudikettu* women perform the ceremonial wailing.

5. There are various types of funeral dances performed by the Mudugas of Attappady such as, *parivattu, malaiyattu, oorattu, dillana* [illegible] etc

6. Yalman (1967). David (1973), and Good (1981) report this term for the Sinhalese, the Jaffna Tamils and the Kondaiyan kottai Maravar respectively-

7. See Note.3

8. Regarding the sitting posture of the corpse, there is a widely said myth among the Mudugas. The myth says that, once four brothers (believed to be their ancestors) traveled towards the four sides of their village to understand the distance of each side. Thus one went to the northern side, other to the south and the last two towards the east, and the west respectively. After few months, all the three who went to the south, east and west returned knowing the distance of their respective side But, the one who traveled towards the north did not return. The three brothers sitting under a tree started waiting for their brother's return by looking towards the northern side But even after years he did not return and the three brothers sitting like that wtth legs folded, died one after the other Thus, as a mark of respect towards those ancestors and for their memory, Mudugas bury their dead ones tn a sitting posture with legs folded

9 Even tf a soul *(ntgaaf)* is separated from the living and introduced into the company of ancestors, incorporation into the 'world of ancestor*' takes place only after the dry-funeral Till then their abode is the grave-yard and are believed to visit the close relatives in the hamlet by itself

10 De coppet (1981 : 175-204) summarized Hertz's main conclusion as

i) death is not felt as an instantaneous destruction of an individual t life

ii) death is rather to be seen as a social event, the starting point of a ceremonial process where by the dead person becomes an ancestor

iii) death is like an initiation into a social after life making t a kind of reburth (referred in Palgi and Abramovitch, 1984 385-417).

11. Double funeral are often linked to the opposition of bones to the flesh, i c the dry transcendental elements of the skeleton as opposed to the wet or temporal elements of the flesh.

12. This *rai* grains used for the ritual is treated with extreme care. It should no* be plucked from the plant and dried in the sun. It should remain in the plant itself and get dried up.

13 The word *savu* has related meanings like death, funeral and also corpse. The word *paccha,* has two meanings, green, and raw or wet. Here, the word *paccha* is used in the latter sense.

14. This is a miniature form of the bamboo bier (*kattil*) made for keeping corpse during the death ceremony.

15 The construction of *goodagara* is exactly similar to that which is constructed during the death ceremony.

16 The Thodukki hamlet supply this wood from a particular tree called *aanelmaram* (?) for all the Muduga and kurumba hamlets and also for the Todas of Nilgiri

17 There are different views regarding the belief system associated with the *nigaalkallu* among the tribes of Nilgiris and surrounding area. Anantha Krishna Iyer/Bala Ratnam (1961 177) hold that " the spirit of the deceased . .. Is supposed to dwell in the pebble," where as Noble (1976 . 120) says that "there is no positive identity of stone with the departed spirit" but later described them as being "related to spirits of the departed" (1989 : 44). Citing these views, Kapp, D B (1985 501) says that, the one given by Anantha Krishna Iyer/Bala Ratnam represents the most correct one. though not satisfactory

18 This rock cave or *gobbe* where bones are kept is referred to as 'dolmens by D B Kapp(1985)